



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES SENTENCING OF INDIANAPOLIS WOMAN WHO DEFRAUDED WAL-MART OF MORE THAN QUARTER MILLION

Woman created fake paychecks, identification as part of complex scheme

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS – Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, announced today that April L. Cole, age 38, of Indianapolis, was sentenced to 36 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker following Cole’s guilty plea to the transfer of false identification documents.

“Cases such as this one show the end result of what happens when someone allows their life to be consumed by greed,” Hogsett said. “Our office is dedicated to rooting out the culture of corruption in this area, and today’s sentencing is yet another step in the right direction.”

Beginning as early as 2004, Cole was involved in a scheme to cash counterfeit payroll checks at Wal-Mart Stores in central Indiana and the surrounding area through the use of fraudulent identification documents. Cole created fraudulent driver’s licenses and counterfeit payroll checks on her home computers and then provided those documents to “runners” who would negotiate the checks at Wal-Mart stores.

The proceeds were split among Cole, others who recruited and managed the runners, and the runners themselves. The total loss to Wal-Mart as a result of the scheme was approximately \$285,000.

Law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at the Indianapolis residence of Cole in October 2009. Found in her home were the equipment and materials utilized to create the fraudulent documents. The items located included card stock, blank ID cards, counterfeit checks, counterfeit driver’s licenses, as well as six computers. The operation of the scheme ended with the execution of the search warrant, but Cole was not apprehended until May of 2011.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney James M. Warden who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Barker also imposed 3 years supervised release following Cole's release from prison. Cole must also pay restitution in the amount of \$267,974 to Wal-Mart Stores. This case was the result of an investigation by the United States Secret Service and the Indiana State Police.

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